Contents

→ The Office of the Dean of Research
→ Prof. Jane Ohlmeyer
→ We’re in this together
→ Dean Gail McElroy
→ Dean Orla Sheils
→ Dean Sylvia Draper
Dean and Vice-President for Research

Trinity is home to a host of excellent, world-class researchers across a broad range of disciplines and across a whole range of experience. Starting with undergraduates who complete research projects as part of their degrees, postgraduates and PhD candidates who engage with research on a daily basis, right through to postdoctoral researchers and academic staff on the cusp of great discoveries, from our first days at Trinity research is at the heart of everything we do.

We are driven by a passion for research and scholarship that has a fundamental influence on our teaching and culture. Research, along with teaching, forms our identity and is one of the factors that makes Trinity the leading university in Ireland and a university of international standing.

As you embark on postgraduate education and research in this historic university, we encourage you to be driven by curiosity, develop your research networks within and beyond your disciplines, be fearless in the pursuit of all forms of knowledge and make positive contributions to the culture of research, innovation and community here in Trinity.

Research is not easy. There will be times where you hit a wall that seems insurmountable, but all the great discoveries in research have come about due to the perseverence and determination of individuals and groups. To fail is not to be a failure – every time something doesn’t work the way you had expected, you’re a step closer to finding out how it will. It’s a fundamental part of the research journey.

Very best wishes to all of you as you begin your own research journeys and welcome to this wonderful community we call Trinity.

Dean Linda Doyle
The Office of the Dean of Research

The Office of the Dean of Research oversees research policy and research governance matters in College. The office engages in matters of strategic importance to the research landscape whilst also dealing with operational matters across College. The Office consists of the Dean of Research, two Associate Deans, the Head of Strategic Research Development, a Research Strategy Officer and the PA to the Dean of Research.

→ In June 2019, Trinity launched its first ever Research Charter and a Living Research Excellence Strategy for College. The Research Charter is our public commitment to a set of seven key principles that underpin our research whilst the Living Research Excellence Strategy is about actions we need to take to make the Research Charter a reality.

→ When we set out to create a strategy it became clear that there was a real hunger to reassert some core principles around our research and to reset what matters to us in terms of research. The Research Charter, based on seven principles, was borne out of this desire.

TCD’s Research Charter

→ Cherish academic freedom, diversity of scholarship, and pursuit of truth
→ Position research at the heart of Trinity.
→ Foster and grow research talent.
→ Harness our collective expertise for the greater good.
→ Broaden our local and global impact.
→ Engage profoundly with our publics.
→ Stand up for research.
→ Both documents are the outcome of a highly collaborative process which included strong student input.

You can read more about these documents here:
→ Research Charter https://www.tcd.ie/research/about/charter/
→ One of the seven principles in our Charter is ‘Standing Up for Research’. This is especially important in today’s world. We need to ensure that the neutral voice of the expert researcher is taken seriously, that research continues to be resourced, and that research continues to matter. To that end, #researchMATTERS is our research magazine and our way of sharing some of the many research stories that are part of work and life in Trinity. Contributions from researchers at any stage of their career are welcome.

→ In addition to this, we will soon launch an exciting new project called ‘SOAPbox - the Student Open Access Project’ where we engage with student-run publications to fully integrate their work, platforms and practices into the open research environment. This will assist students to increase the impact of their work at an early stage of their careers as researchers and we will be working closely with the Graduate Students’ Union, TCD library and others to deliver this programme.

Further info:
→ For more information about this project and other initiatives our office is engaged in, please visit https://www.tcd.ie/research/ and follow us on Twitter @TCDdeanresearch
Dear Students,

As new or returning members of Trinity’s postgraduate community you may be aware of the tall contemporary building on Fellow’s Square - the Trinity Long Room Hub. Home to forty Early Career Researchers from over twenty disciplines in the Arts and Humanities, this is Trinity’s Arts and Humanities research institute. I’d like to tell you what we do in this building and how it could benefit your research.

Firstly, we support research excellence in the Arts and Humanities. This begins with our Early Career Researchers, who are housed in a study space on the fourth floor of the building. Representing Trinity’s nine Arts and Humanities schools, these doctoral and post-doctoral researchers are the life-blood of our research community. Aside from offering them a stimulating place to carry out their research with all the amenities the building provides, we want help in building their research careers by offering mentoring and skills workshops (including publication workshops), and opportunities for them to communicate their research to the widest possible audiences (including visual research displays).

The second thing we do is promote interdisciplinary research. Our community coffee morning is the highlight of my week and it really shows just how diverse each research area is and how research can be enhanced by engagement across disciplines (e.g. Digital Humanities, Neuro Humanities and Environmental Humanities), and by learning about other research strands. We hope you can join us for some of these coffee mornings, held every Wednesday at 11am in the Trinity Long Room Hub’s Ideas Space. This year we will be asking the research community to relate their research more acutely to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The third thing we do is public humanities. We include wider members of the Trinity community and members of the public in our research discussions. Every year, we have a varied programme of public events, discussing many important topics of national and global significance (you can see our upcoming events by signing-up to our weekly newsletter). So please, come in and join us and find out about the many wonderful research seminars and events taking place weekly throughout the year.
The spirit of participation, social responsibility and civic engagement is not only encouraged at Trinity, but is a thriving and hugely important aspect of life in College across all faculties.

→ Research and teaching partnerships, staff and student volunteer activity, becoming a GSU class or school rep, are all great ways for you to take part in campus life. Volunteering a little of your time can bring a wealth of benefits, including meeting inspirational academic researchers within your field, transferable skills, improved confidence and motivation, as well as a chance to meet new people and engage in life outside of the library or lab.

→ Students who are interested in researching opportunities to become involved should visit the Trinity Civic Engagement website at www.tcd.ie/Community, or get in touch directly with the many societies, clubs and charitable organisations that operate on campus.

We want you

The Graduate Student’s Union wants you to be part of the GSU family on campus this year, and there are a variety ways for to do this; from representing your class as a class rep, your PhD fellow research students as a PhD rep or PhD vice-rep or your school as GSU school rep, all these positions are available in each class, school and in each faculty. Here is what one of our School reps says about her experience in the GSU this year.

‘I found it really worth-while volunteering this year in Trinity’s Graduate Students’ Union. The GSU helps people to find their feet when they arrive first on campus and it continues to help people find their feet throughout the year. I found being a part of the GSU as a PhD student over the past few years really very rewarding.’

Lisanne Peters, PhD student School of Chemistry, Trinity College Dublin.

→ Want to become a rep in your class, school or faculty? (see p.14) There are three faculties in Trinity College: the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Sciences. Do think about joining our GSU family as a rep and help us make college a happy, thriving research community. You’ll find us at www.tcdgsu.ie/officers

→ If you’re wondering which faculty you belong to, here are the very accomplished academic professors, directors and faculty Deans to offer you inspiring leadership in 2019. When we asked them for some welcoming words for you our postgraduate members, we were both humbled and moved by their generous words.
Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

The Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences has by far the largest cohort of postgraduate students across the College. As the newly elected Dean of the Faculty, I would like to welcome our new PG students, and indeed to welcome back returning students. The Faculty is the largest and most diverse in the University, comprising of 12 Schools and a total of 25 Disciplines. Our Schools include most of the highest ranked subject areas in the University, many of them internationally renowned and ranked in the top 50 worldwide (QS Rankings).

Our Schools are home to a large number of internationally-regarded taught Master’s programmes. In 2019–20, approximately one third of the Faculty’s discretionary Strategic Fund was allocated to taught Master’s Scholarships. Each of the Schools also has a large and active community of research students and postdoctoral research fellows.

Furthermore, we play an important part in the cultural and intellectual life of the institution, the city, and the nation. The Faculty is home to a major interdisciplinary research institute in the Arts and Humanities, the Trinity Long Room Hub, and to Trinity Research in Social Sciences (TRiSS), a broad-based endeavour encompassing the best of our research and thinking in the Social Sciences.

I urge all of our PG students to take this unique opportunity to work with and learn from our professors, many of whom are global leaders in research.

I would also like to wish both Sabbatical Officers who run the Graduate Students’ Union (GSU) and broaden the GSU team by recruiting representatives from within the twelve schools in our Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty, all the very best from the Faculty itself for the academic year ahead.

Dean Gail McElroy
Dean of The Faculty of Health Sciences

I am delighted to welcome our new and returning postgraduate students in my capacity as a newly-appointed Dean in the Faculty of Health Sciences. Our faculty incorporates the Schools of Dental Science, Medicine, Nursing & Midwifery, and Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Science. At the core of our activities in Health Sciences is the understanding that all of our activities begin with and centre on our patients. We believe that being part of an inter-professional community of service-oriented scholars aspiring to change lives through education, research, healing, and care is key to success.

One of the most attractive aspects of working within the Faculty of Health Sciences is the opportunity to embark on globally engaged, enterprising research to address real life problems that impact on well-being. Our strategy of improving human health through research is predicated on clinical, laboratory-based and health service research informed by real world, clinical bedside problems, and societal and global health challenges.

Our PG programme activity – taught and research – is dispersed far wider than the main campus. Through engagement with our clinical partners our postgraduate students embody a new model of enablement and research integration with an emphasis on clinical strengths.

The grounded nature of our PG programmes ensures that our graduates can engage in meaningful, proactive dialogue with students, staff, government, industry and the community to identify needs and solutions, and inform policy.

Within Health Sciences we cherish a rich diversity of staff and students all equally valued in the faculty community. We embrace the increased use of technology for flexible learning, micro-credentialing and continuing professional development.

As someone who has been a student, researcher and teacher in this Faculty, I am immensely proud to now serve as Dean and work with you to ensure we continue to be a force for excellence in our ability to deal with the health challenges of today, and through our research and innovation that we create change for a better society tomorrow.
Dear Graduate,

It is a pleasure to write to you and an honour to do so as the newly elected Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Maths and Science (FEMS).

There are more graduates in FEMS than in any other Faculty in the College. You will find it hard to locate a lecturer here that does not hold a higher degree. Many of us are graduates of faraway places, bringing a diversity of cultural, social, research and teaching practices not just to our thinking but to Trinity. What sets graduates apart is their determination to make a novel and personal impact on research and to push the knowledge within their discipline a little deeper or wider.

In my case, I spent three years creating small metalloborane clusters and decorating them with precious metals! They were air-sensitive, but beautiful on both a macroscopic and molecular level. The work I did provided evidence for something called the ‘Isobal Analogy’ and saw me working long hours, (well into the night when the spectrometers were available!). I was part of a team (from Swaziland, Cambridge, Lebanon and China) and I chose my supervisor because, among other qualities, she was a rare Cambridge Professor of Inorganic Chemistry.

By playing with amazing equipment, and interacting with great minds, FEMS graduates do not simply broaden their disciplinary knowledge. They also gain a deeper understanding of themselves; discovering what inspiration really means, and how to work with others, so as to get the best from them, and from themselves. They learn effective communication, time-keeping, and other organisational skills. In dedicating several years of their lives to answering a research question, they become experts in an area that just might revolutionise the way we live on this planet, and may well save us from destroying it.

I don’t know what could be more challenging or rewarding at your stage in life but set out purposefully, and be rigorous and honest.

It will be a privilege to be involved in the greatest period of expansion in the lifetime of FEMS. I wish you more than just individual success, for Trinity’s future rests in your hands.
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